

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. Cancelled.
2. Cancelled.
3. (Previously amended) A method of returning a weight from a weight field of a database wherein said database has at least one data field for storing a set of data relative to a corresponding article, packing material, and container, and wherein said set of data comprises at least said weight field, the method comprising the steps of:
  - (a) initiating a cost determining routine in a shipping system application at a first node;
  - (b) entering a description of said corresponding article, said packing material, and said container into a first data field of said rate determining routine;
  - (c) transmitting a query from said routine to said database for a weight associated with said corresponding article, said packing material, and said container;
  - (d) returning said weight to said routine; and
  - (e) displaying the cost to ship the article, packing material and container.
4. (Cancelled)
5. (Previously amended) A method of providing for weight-based determinations of one or more articles to be shipped, the method comprising the steps of:
  - a) initiating a cost determining routine in a shipping system application at a first node;

- b) entering a code or a description of each one of said one or more articles into a first data field of said routine;
- c) entering a code or a description of the container in which the articles are going to be shipped;
- d) transmitting a query from said routine to a database located at a second node for a weight associated with said each one of said one or more articles and said container;
- e) returning said weight to said routine for use in calculating a cost for shipping said each of said one or more articles and said container;
- f) entering said weight into a second data field of said shipping system application as an input parameter; and
- g) determining said cost for shipping said each of said one or more articles and container based upon a set of one or more input parameters.

6. (Previously amended) The method of claim 5, wherein said initiation of said routine is via Internet or modem and where said initiating site is remote to said database.

7. (Previously amended) The method of claim 5 wherein said initiation of said routine occurs at a data processing system co-located with said application and said database.

8. (Previously amended) The method of claim 5, wherein said database further comprises a set of codes (such as UPC or EAN) data.

9. (Previously amended) The method of claim 5, wherein said database further comprises a set of data comprising a recorded weight associated with a set of one or more articles wherein said recorded weight is entered by a system operator.

10. (Previously amended) The method of claim 5, further including the steps of:  
entering a code or a description of the packing material that is included in the container to be shipped; and

determining the cost for shipping the packing material.

11. (Previously amended) The method claimed in claim 10, further including the steps of determining the weight of the packing material using the volume of the container minus the volumes of the articles in the container multiplied by the density of the packing material.

12. (Previously amended) The method of claim 5, further including the steps of:

storing the cost for shipping each one or more articles and the container in a completed container data base at the second node;

submitting said container to a carrier for acceptance; and

determining by the carrier the cost to ship said container.

13. (Previously amended) The method of claim 12, further including the step of:

isolating the containers that do not have the proper postage.

14. (Previously amended) The method of claim 13, further including the step of:

billing mailers who have not paid sufficient funds to ship said container.

15. (Previously amended) The method of claim 13, further including the step of:

refunding monies to mailers who have overpaid to ship said container.

16. (Previously amended) The method claimed in claim 13, further including the steps of:

comparing the stored weight for shipping the article and container in the completed container database with the weight determined by the carrier to ship the container; and

querying the manufacturer of the articles and containers concerning their actual weight if the compared total weights are not the same.

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17. (Previously amended) The method claimed in claim 16, further including the step of:

updating the weights associated with each one or more articles and said container at the database located at the second node.